

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### LAKE MEAD LODGE (Hualapai Lodge)

HABS NV-60

Location:	322 Lakeshore Road, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Boulder City vicinity, Nevada
Date of Construction:	1941, ca. 1954
Present Owner:	National Park Service
Present Use:	No longer in use
Significance:	Lake Mead Lodge was a key part of the plan to develop recreation and tourism at Lake Mead National Recreation Area and in southern Nevada between 1941 and 1955. The lodge became the first hotel on Lake Mead when it was built in 1941, and it was one of the first tourist facilities constructed inside of the recreation area.
Historian:	Christy Avery, National Park Service, Pacific West Regional Office-Seattle
Project Information:	HABS documentation for Lake Mead Lodge began in November of 2008. At this time, the National Park Service owned the land and the buildings, but Seven Crowns Resorts managed the property and held possessory interest in the lodge. Seven Crowns ceased lodge operations in November of 2008, and the National Park Service expects to buy out the possessory interest in the lodge in 2009. As of December 2008, the park is exploring adaptive use of the lodge, and plans to mothball the facility until park staff identifies an appropriate reuse.

## Part I: Historical Information

Lake Mead Lodge lies in Lake Mead National Recreation Area, which became the first national recreation area in the United States after the Bureau of Reclamation turned over management of most of its Lake Mead area holdings to the National Park Service (NPS) in 1936. The recreation area occupies the southeastern corner of Nevada and the northwestern corner of Arizona, and it encompasses Lake Mead and Lake Mohave. Lake Mead NRA was the first of a number of new recreation areas established in the 1930s and 1940s; units encompassing reservoirs were called national recreation areas. Unlike national parks that had been founded to preserve natural or historic resources, these areas were intended for intensive public use, and the NPS allowed the public to engage in many types of recreational activities that were forbidden at national parks. National Park Service leaders hoped that these changes would make its holdings more popular and accessible.<sup>1</sup>

During the 1930s and 1940s, the recreation area had little infrastructure or tourist facilities, and since the National Park Service considered these areas inferior to national parks, development at Lake Mead remained a low priority.<sup>2</sup> Many early visitors came only to see Hoover Dam, not Lake Mead. Grand Canyon-Boulder Dam Tours, Inc.(GCBDT) operated a group of tent cabins, a dining room, a dock and an airstrip at Pearce's Ferry, at the reservoir's eastern end (at the western edge of the Grand Canyon) during this time, and that facility represented the only tourist accommodations on the lake before 1941. Despite the lack of tourist facilities, visitation climbed during the late 1930s. In 1936, the year that the NPS took over management of Lake Mead, 389,294 tourists visited the reservoir or Hoover Dam; by 1940, that number had grown to 655,910.<sup>3</sup>

Lake Mead Lodge was the first hotel on the lake, and it was an integral part of one company's plan to develop and monopolize tourism in southern Nevada. Glover E. Ruxtell, founder of Grand Canyon-Boulder Dam Tours, Inc, (GCBDT), anticipated the boom in tourism to the Lake Mead area. He sought to create a tourism empire, by initiating services and acquiring existing tourist companies, in the region. He founded the company in 1935 and expanded rapidly. In May of 1937, GCBDT was granted an exclusive twenty year contract to operate all accommodations, transportation services and tourist facilities within twelve miles of Boulder City. The company's operations were subject to strict scrutiny and regulation by the National Park Service. All

---

<sup>1</sup> National Park Service, *The National Parks: Shaping the System*, (Harpers Ferry, WV: National Park Service, 1991), 54-57; Richard Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 131-147. It was not until 1964 that Congress officially designated the recreation area a National Park Service unit.

<sup>2</sup> Hal Rothman, *Balancing the Mandates: Administrative History of Lake Mead National Recreation Area* (draft), 56-58.

<sup>3</sup> National Park Service, "History of Total Attendance, Lake Mead NRA,; online resource accessed on 8 January 2008 at <http://www2.nature.nps.gov/NPstats/dspAnnualVisits.cfm>

building plans had to be approved by the NPS, and GCBDT was required to pay the agency \$250 per year, plus 22.5% of profits earned over 6% of their investment. The company operated boat tours of Lake Mead, scenic airline flights over southern Nevada, Lake Mead and the Grand Canyon from the Boulder City airport, and limousine rides from Boulder City to Hoover Dam and Lake Mead. In 1938, the company even spent \$50,000 to improve the Boulder City airport, in order to lure Trans-World Airlines (TWA) to the region (the airline needed to stop in southern Nevada between San Francisco and Chicago). TWA proved enthusiastic about promoting tourism in southern Nevada, which one airline public relations executive called “the finest playground in the entire West,” and the new airline service enabled tourists from other parts of the United States and Europe to visit the reservoir.<sup>4</sup>

While GCBDT had purchased Boulder City’s Boulder Dam Hotel and also operated rustic tent cabins at Pearce Ferry, where Lake Mead met the Grand Canyon, there was no hotel on the lake, and no accommodations of any kind on the western part of Lake Mead. As a result, the company proposed building a new hotel on the shores of the newly created reservoir—Lake Mead Lodge (originally called Hualapai Lodge).<sup>5</sup>

Lake Mead superintendent Guy Edwards also had big plans for Lake Mead’s development. He believed that vacationers would visit the new recreation area, particularly the Boulder Beach area, if there were tourist facilities, and he instigated plans to develop the site shortly after becoming superintendent. Boulder Beach was a logical location for development, since it was convenient to Las Vegas and Boulder City and contained a long, sandy beach. Its wide expanse and gently sloping topography also enabled large-scale development.<sup>6</sup> By 1938, NPS planners proposed a deluxe lodge, a golf course, campground, picnic areas and cabins at the site. In 1939, the NPS regional office produced plans for a one-story, motel-style lodge.<sup>7</sup> When Patterson proposed that GCBDT build a lodge at Lake Mead, Edwards proved supportive, and he sited the lodge near Boulder Beach due to the park’s larger development plans for the area. Furthermore, water and sewer mains already existed in the area by 1941. GCBDT had hoped to site the lodge “more closely related to the overnight accommodation area” (probably closer to the main road to Boulder City) but the park service denied that request, and insisted on the Boulder Beach location.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Dennis McBride. “Grand Canyon-Boulder Dam Tours, Inc: Southern Nevada’s First Venture into Commercial Tourism,” *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* (Summer 1984), 92-104. Rothman, 88.

<sup>5</sup> McBride, 104. In late 1941 or early 1942, Ruxtell sold GCBDT to Fred Patterson.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Thomas, Design Analysis, Boulder Beach, 1963, National Park Service, Pacific West Regional Office-Oakland files.

<sup>7</sup> “Hemenway Wash, General Development Schemes,” 1 September 1937; National Park Service, “Hemenway Wash Area,” 1 January 1938, National Park Service, Technical Information Center, [etc.nps.gov](http://etc.nps.gov) (etc).

<sup>8</sup> Alfred Kuehl to Chief of Planning, WASO, 2 March 1941, RG 79, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)-Laguna Niguel (CA) Branch.

Despite the enthusiasm of park management for accommodations at the lake, the park service's regional director expressed uncertainty. He worried that GCBDT was creating, rather than fulfilling, a need, and that people would not want to stay in an area with such temperature extremes (the area was cold in winter but hot in summer). GCBDT's William Irwin assured acting park superintendent Robert Rose in 1940 that the lodge would become "a popular resort almost overnight."<sup>9</sup> Rose proved enthusiastic, and he pointed out to the regional director that Boulder City hotels were busy or full much of the year. He also explained that the units would have cooling systems to mitigate the summer heat.<sup>10</sup> The company's initial plans included individual cottages and employee housing, but they decided to build three larger lodge units instead in order to save on construction and utility operating costs.<sup>11</sup>

The park service approved the company's architectural drawings for the lodge, from San Francisco architect W.D. Peugh, in April of 1941.<sup>12</sup> NPS architects judged the initial design to be monotonous, so they asked for changes that broke the roof lines and used floor level changes to make the structures fit in with the topography.<sup>13</sup> The three one-story buildings, constructed with concrete block walls, concrete floors, and steel framed windows, were finished by October.<sup>14</sup> The interior and exterior were whitewashed, and each room had heating and cooling. Lodge buildings A and B each contained eighteen guestrooms, and the lodge administration building included a dining room, kitchen, lounge, lecture room (for park service presentations), staff housing, office space, lobby, gift shop and outdoor patio.<sup>15</sup>

The buildings were eclectic, containing elements of Spanish-style architecture, with terra cotta tile rooms and decorative motifs, as well as features associated with International style (as evidenced by the buildings' corner windows). The National Park Service assumed responsibility for landscaping, and they planned to create an oasis-like area in the desert, but they planted only a small number of shrubs and trees in the early 1940s.<sup>16</sup> The company successfully publicized the new lodge across the nation, and the opening of the hotel made news as far away as New York City. In newspaper and magazine articles that extolled the recreational opportunities on Lake Mead, the lodge was often mentioned as the logical place to stay.<sup>17</sup> The facility was

---

<sup>9</sup> William Irwin to Robert Rose, 28 August 1940, RG 79, NARA-Laguna Niguel.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Rose, Comments on Director's Memo of 29 July 1940, 19 August 1940, RG 79, NARA-Laguna Niguel.

<sup>11</sup> Newton Drury to the Secretary of the Interior, 21 August 1940, RG 79, NARA-Laguna Niguel.

<sup>12</sup> W.D. Peugh, "Lodge Buildings, Hualapai," etc. The architectural firm Lescher and Mahoney may have revised Peugh's drawings in May of 1941

<sup>13</sup> Kuehl to Chief of Planning, 2 March 1941, RG 79, NARA-Laguna Niguel.

<sup>14</sup> Douglas to Guy Edwards, 23 April 1941, RG 79, NARA-Laguna Niguel.

<sup>15</sup> "Hualapai Lodge, on Lake Mead, \$90,000 Project," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 11 October 1941.

<sup>16</sup> The NPS finished a detailed planting plan in 1942, but more extensive landscaping (including a grassy lawn and numerous trees and shrubs) was not completed until 1949. National Park Service, Branch of Planning and Design, "Hualapai Lodge Planting Plan, 1942," etc. [nps.gov](http://nps.gov).

<sup>17</sup> Diana Rice, "New Lake Mead Lodge," *New York Times*, 17 August 1941; Jack Goodman, "Desert Attractions," 16 March 1947; Ward Allen Howe, "Boulder City Awaiting the Races," *New York Times*, 23 October 1960.

renamed Lake Mead Lodge in September of 1945, since the name better reflected its lakeside location and was easier to spell and pronounce than Hualapai.<sup>18</sup>

World War II prevented Lake Mead Lodge from becoming a popular resort in the early 1940s, yet the lodge managed to attract some business. The facility opened less than two months before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and the outbreak of war discouraged European tourists, who had represented a large proportion of tourists to the park, from travelling to the area.<sup>19</sup> Wartime restrictions also hindered American tourist travel and stymied the growth of southern Nevada tourism in general. Workers in defense related industries, such as employees of Basic Magnesium, Inc., were sometimes housed in the lodge. Other visitors were defense workers who had moved to the Las Vegas area.<sup>20</sup> The lodge became a popular gathering spot for Boulder City locals, who came to drink and dance at the area's only bar. The new hotel had obtained permission to sell liquor, a privilege denied to Boulder City hotels.<sup>21</sup> The bar continued to draw local residents after the war. The lounge had one of the few televisions in the 1950s, and local residents gathered to watch boxing matches on Wednesdays and Fridays. Hollywood celebrities were rumored to come for illicit weekends.<sup>22</sup>

Visitation at Lake Mead skyrocketed after World War II, as it did at national parks across the nation, due to a combination of increased leisure time, rising automobile ownership, and a rapidly growing population. In 1951, 2,051,000 million people visited Lake Mead, more than triple the amount that visited eleven years earlier. By 1958, the number had increased to 4,597,000. In southern Nevada, transportation improvements and thousands of new residents boosted visitation at Lake Mead. Transcontinental drivers could access the lake by detouring from Route 66. California tourists followed the newly constructed U.S. 91 from Los Angeles to Las Vegas and then took local roads to the lake. Las Vegas experienced huge population increases during the war due to the defense industries that attracted large numbers of workers, and these new residents flocked to Lake Mead. Only 8,422 people lived in Las Vegas in 1940, but ten years later, that number had grown to 48,283. By 1960, 127,016 lived in the metropolitan area, which sprawled east toward the lake. The city of Phoenix, 250 miles from the recreation area, grew tremendously after the war, and this city's residents also flocked to the lake.<sup>23</sup>

Lake Mead's newfound popularity was also the result of changing recreation patterns. Americans increasingly sought recreational opportunities in their national parks after World War II, and Lake Mead represented a new kind of park service unit, one that placed primary importance on outdoor recreation and that catered to recreational users. Unlike Yellowstone and

---

<sup>18</sup> *Boulder City News*, 20 September 1945, Boulder City Historical Society Archives, Boulder City, Nevada.

<sup>19</sup> McBride, 107.

<sup>20</sup> Robert Rose to War Protection Board, 15 June 1942, Buildings File, NARA-Laguna Niguel.

<sup>21</sup> *Boulder City News*, 13 December 1956, Boulder City Historical Society Archives.

<sup>22</sup> *Boulder City News*, 13 May 1953; "Lake Mead Lodge was favored by celebrities," 23 March 1972, Boulder City News.

<sup>23</sup> Rothman, 83.

Yosemite, parks that figured large in the American imagination and drew visitors for long stays, Lake Mead drew regional visitors for day and weekend visits.<sup>24</sup> The popularity of water sports rose rapidly after the war. Americans who could not afford to live on lakes or other bodies of water headed to government administered reservoirs such as Lake Mead, and much of visitors' time was spent boating, fishing or swimming in what they considered to be a desert oasis.<sup>25</sup> For the tourist without a car, Las Vegas casinos offered excursions to the lake during this time. Still, little development occurred in the park until 1955, when the Mission 66 program—a new National Park Service initiative—allowed the park to obtain funding for much needed facilities, such as campgrounds, visitors' centers, and boat launches.

The NPS still hoped to have a full scale resort in the Boulder Beach area, and they encouraged GCBDT to expand the lodge. Park Service staff had correctly predicted the popularity of Boulder Beach, and it had become the park's most visited area. In 1945, the company developed plans to enlarge the hotel facilities to include a golf course, riding stables, and extensive boat facilities.<sup>26</sup> In 1947, an investment group led by singer Bing Crosby was rumored to be interested in expanding facilities at Lake Mead, including the lodge.<sup>27</sup> However, to the frustration of park management, neither of these plans came to fruition. GCBDT probably lacked the capital to invest in the lodge, since other aspects of their operations (such as the scenic flights) continually lost money. In an attempt to stem the loss of money, the company sold or subcontracted many of its services during the 1940s and 1950s. For example, it subcontracted management of Lake Mead Lodge to Continental Hotel Systems, Inc, of Glendale, California, in 1948.<sup>28</sup> The agreement stipulated that Continental pay 25% revenue from rooms, 7% from bar, and 7% from food and souvenirs to GCBDT. In 1949, the NPS approved a \$10,000 dining room addition despite its fears that the expenditure would prevent other improvements, and that “architecturally, it will detract to some extent from the present satisfactory appearance” of the lodge. The addition was built in the International style, with a flat roof and prominent use of windows.<sup>29</sup> In 1950, park inspectors appeared happy with the lodge, which they described as in “excellent” condition.<sup>30</sup>

In the early 1950s, concessionaires built other accommodations in the recreation area, but these facilities were usually primitive (the NPS characterized some of them as “fishing camps”) and lacked the amenities associated with a full scale hotel. Rustic “fishermen’s cabins” were

---

<sup>24</sup> Ethan Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma*, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007, 29; Rothman, 56-58; 68.

<sup>25</sup> Rothman, 115.

<sup>26</sup> *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal*, 6 October 1945, Boulder City Historical Society Archives; GCBDT prospectus, 2 January 1945.

<sup>27</sup> McBride, 107.

<sup>28</sup> *Boulder City News*, “Lake Mead Lodge Deal is Final,” 14 January 1948. GCBDT subcontracted management of the marina to a separate party.

<sup>29</sup> M.R. Tillotson to Director, National Park Service, 13 April, 1949, RG 79, NARA-Laguna Niguel.

<sup>30</sup> Report of Inspection of Concession Facilities, 1950, Concessions File, NARA-Laguna Niguel.

built at Temple Bar on Lake Mead in 1952, and other simple cabins were built on Lake Mojave at Searchlight Ferry and Eldorado Canyon in the recreation area during the decade as well. These Lake Mojave developments evolved out of fishing camps that had been set on the Colorado River, before the Bureau of Reclamation constructed Davis Dam. In 1952, an eight-room guest unit was built at Katherine Landing on Lake Mojave, though this facility lacked the size and amenities of Lake Mead Lodge.<sup>31</sup>

Visitation to Lake Mead surpassed Park Service calculations during the postwar rise travel boom. By the mid-1950s, Boulder Beach drew almost two million visitors per year. Despite the growth in tourism to the lake, the hotel lost money in the early 1950s. GCBDT had suffered from overregulation and poor business decisions from their incorporation. The company's contract with the National Park Service hindered their attempts to run a profitable business, since every price change and employee hire had to be approved by the Secretary of the Interior. The hotel was also required to provide Interior department employees with free accommodation while on government business, but "government business" was loosely defined. Company head Patterson also blamed the hotel's location for its troubles, since it was located two miles north of the highway that ran between Boulder City and Hoover Dam, and thus not visible to passing motorists.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, the company's air tours were highly unprofitable and represented a drain on the company's finances.<sup>33</sup>

The lease between the NPS and GCBDT was set to expire in 1957, and the NPS sought improvements at Lake Mead Lodge before it would negotiate a new contract. It is likely that the concessionaire did not have the capital to make substantial improvements, and in 1954, GCBDT sold Lake Mead Lodge to their subcontractor, Continental Hotel Systems, Inc.<sup>34</sup> With the enthusiastic support of the National Park Service, who had sought an owner that would expand lodge facilities, Continental President W.A. Porter paid GCBDT \$262, 000 for the buildings. The NPS had long considered the facility inadequate, and they urged Porter to build a new central lodge building and to begin other improvements.<sup>35</sup> In response to NPS demands, Porter constructed a 30,000 gallon pool and a small, round wading pool. A fourth lodge building (the annex) was built, probably in 1954. Employee housing had always been scarce, and the company planned to use the building as an eight room employee dormitory. The structure was designed to fit in to the existing complex, and like the other eclectic buildings, displayed elements of

---

<sup>31</sup> National Park Service, Master Plan Development Outline, Lake Mead, 1952, NPS PWRO-Oakland files; National Park Service, Temple Bar Vicinity Development, 1 December 1952, NPS PWRO-Oakland files; National Park Service, Lake Mojave Master Plan, 1952; National Park Service, Mission 66 Prospectus, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, May 23, 1956, RG 79, NARA-Laguna Niguel.

<sup>32</sup> Frederick Patterson, 4 December 1950, to M.R. Tillotson, Regional Director, RG 79, NARA-Laguna Niguel.

<sup>33</sup> McBride, 105-107.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 105-107.

<sup>35</sup> Memo to Director from Regional Director, 8 December 1953, Concession Contracts File, RG 79, NARA-Laguna Niguel.

Spanish-style architecture, with the same type of roof, support beams, porch, and fixtures as the other three buildings. It is unclear whether the building was initially used to house staff, or if management decided to use the annex as guest rooms from the start.<sup>36</sup>

Significant development occurred at Lake Mead National Recreation Area during the Mission 66 period. National parks had suffered from low funding levels throughout World War II and into the 1950s, and parks had too few campgrounds, roads, accommodations, restrooms, parking lots and other facilities to meet the demands of postwar travelers. In 1955, NPS director Conrad Wirth proposed the Mission 66 program, and the next year Congress approved funding for the \$700 million program. Mission 66 was the most recent period of park expansion and development, by 1966, \$1 billion had been spent on land acquisitions, staffing and new or improved facilities. At Lake Mead, concessionaires built accommodations at a number of locations on Lake Mead and Lake Mojave. Furthermore, a number of other new hotels had been built in the region as tourism in southern Nevada grew in the 1950s and 1960s, and competition for the tourist dollar grew among area hotels.

By 1959, Continental Hotels sought to sell the lodge. Evidence suggests that no buyer appeared until October of 1961, when McCulloch Corporation took over operations. The corporation also bought Lake Mead Marina, and it installed the world's largest floating restaurant at the site. Uninterested in operating two restaurants, the company closed the lodge's dining room and bar. Though the lodge was no longer the only hotel on the lake, it continued to attract boaters and fisherman who used the nearby marina facilities. The lodge was also a favored weekend getaway of Las Vegas-based celebrities such as Andy Williams, Don Rickles and Harry Belafonte, who chartered boats from the marina. In 1974, the NPS issued a contract for lodge operations to the Plunkett Family's Leisurama, Inc. Leisurama changed its name to Lake Mead Enterprises, then sold their assets to Lake Mead Resort. The company made a number of minor modifications to the lodge grounds, including the gazebos, the rope fences, the lamp posts, and the palm trees. The wading pool was filled in during the early 1980s. In 1987 Lake Mead Resort became Seven Crowns Resorts, the concessionaire in 2008.<sup>37</sup>

Lake Mead National Recreation Area has become one of the most popular National Park Service sites, attracting over eight million visitors per year. Lake Mead Lodge served the needs of the growing demands of postwar tourists, and it has provided reasonably priced lodging to

---

<sup>36</sup> "Negotiations Underway for sale of Lake Mead Lodge, boat facilities," *Boulder City News*, 28 January 1954; Memo to Director from Regional Director, 8 December 1953, Concessions, RG 79, NARA-Laguna Niguel; National Park Service, "Eight Unit Employees Dormitory," 1 May 1953, NPS Technical Information Center, [etc.nps.gov](http://etc.nps.gov); Kent Stevens, "Limited Appraisal Assignment Summary Appraisal Report," Lake Mead Lodge, 6 October 1998, LAME archives; Aerial Photograph #5595, LAME Archives. Kent Stevens reports that the building was constructed in 1954, though a 1957 NPS assessment states that only three lodge buildings exist. The annex may have initially been used as employee housing, and was thus not counted as a lodge building. Archival photos prove that it was built before 1960.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with former lodge manager Paul Chandler, Jr., by author, 24 January 2008.



vacationers since 1941. Its history reflects the establishment and popularity of Lake Mead National Recreation area, and the growth of outdoor recreation in the latter half of the twentieth century. As of June 2008, it is the oldest operating accommodation in the recreation area. The National Park Service expects to take ownership of the lodge in 2008.

## Part II: Architectural Information

Lake Mead Lodge contains four buildings—the annex, the south wing (building A), the administration building (building C), and the north wing (building B)—which are laid out south to north. These structures are eclectic, and contain elements of International style and Spanish-style architecture. All face east, toward Lake Mead, and the guest rooms are afforded views of the lake. A 30,000 gallon pool lies to the east of the lodge buildings, across the parking lot from the administration building.

### Administration Building (Lodge Building C)

This building was constructed in 1941, and is located between buildings A and B. It is single-story, with a low-pitched concrete shake roof, concrete block walls and a concrete foundation. This building has an eclectic architectural style, containing elements of International style and Spanish-style architecture. The building is 235.5' long and is of varying widths, from 16.5' at its narrowest, to 50' wide at its widest. It covers 6,675 square feet.<sup>38</sup> Two sections of shallow, front gabled roof, each with a kingpost open truss, are prominent, east-facing features near each end of the structure. They are supported by pairs of concrete block supports that convey mass and strength. The supports have a decorative quality, and each contains one corbelled opening with a Southwest motif. The roof overhang and supports create two small patio areas in front of the building.

A 52' long meeting room protrudes from the front center of the structure and is a prominent feature. It is lined with three large windows on each side and seven in the front. Its simple style, lack of ornamentation, prominent windows and flat roof are typical of International style architecture. The concessionaire added the room in 1949 after lodge management and NPS staff agreed that the lodge needed increased dining room capacity. The addition was built over what had served as a patio, and it nearly doubled the seating capacity of the dining room from 35 to 68.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Kent C. Stevens, "Limited Appraisal Assignment Summary Appraisal Report," Lake Mead Lodge, 6 October 1998, Lake Mead National Recreation Area (LAME) Archives; "Lodge Buildings---Hualapai," 1941, National Park Service (NPS) Technical Information Center, [etic.nps.gov](http://etic.nps.gov). Plans for the entire lodge are available at this site.

<sup>39</sup> M.R. Tillotson to Director, NPS, 13 April 1949, Concessions File, RG 79, National Archives and Records Administration-Laguna Niguel, Ca.

A shed roof with concrete shake tiles, reminiscent of the terra cotta tiles that were originally used as roofing, tops the rest of the building. Windows have either eight, twelve, sixteen or twenty panes, and are steel-framed and single-pane. Redwood posts that measure 6" x 6" support the shed roof where it hangs over the front of the structure. The public spaces of the building can be accessed by solid-core wood double doors, just north of the meeting room, or through the solid core wood double doors that lead directly into the lobby.

The interior spaces have been rearranged over time. The original building was laid out, from north to south, in the following order: Business office, manager's bedroom, office, curio shop (due west of the office), dining room, kitchen, restrooms, cocktail lounge, lecture room (for park service presentations), and three rooms for employees.<sup>40</sup> Suite one formerly served as manager's quarters and office space, and suite two originally served as the lodge office and souvenir shop. The spaces were converted into suites sometime after 1957. By 1959, the curio shop may have been replaced by a larger lobby (though no structural modifications were made), and the business office had been incorporated into the manager's living quarters. The dining room was converted into a meeting room, and the bar removed, sometime after 1965.<sup>41</sup> None of these changes altered the exterior of the structure.

This structure contains, in 2008, an operations office, a registration desk, a small lobby, laundry facilities, an employee break room, a manager's residence, a large meeting room, storage areas and two guest suites (numbered one and two). Each suite contains a twenty-pane corner window (suite two has two of them); corner windows were a hallmark of International style. Suite two, unlike any other guest room, contains a fireplace. Each suite has a painted board ceiling.

### South Wing (Lodge Building A)

The building was constructed in 1941, and is located just south of the administration building. Like the administration building, building A has an eclectic architectural style, containing elements of International style and Spanish-style architecture. The building is 207' long and 4,524 square feet.<sup>42</sup> There are sixteen units plus an owner's suite. The structure is single-story, with a low-pitched concrete shake roof (reminiscent of terra cotta tile), whitewashed concrete block walls and a concrete slab floor. Two shallow front gables face east, near each end of the structure, while the rest of the building is topped with a shed roof. The shed roof intersects with the two gables. Both the shed roof overhang and the two gables in front of the building are

---

<sup>40</sup> National Park Service, "Electrical Plan Unit C," 22 May 1941, National Park Service (NPS) Technical Information Center, [etc.nps.gov](http://etc.nps.gov).

<sup>41</sup> M.R. Tillotson to Director, NPS, 13 April 1949, Concessions File, RG 79, NARA-Laguna Niguel.

<sup>42</sup> Kent C. Stevens, "Limited Appraisal Assignment Summary Appraisal Report, Lake Mead Lodge," 6 October 1998, LAME archives.

supported by 6" x 6" posts. The roof overhang creates porch space that runs the length of the structure. The windows are single pane, steel-framed and include either two, eight, twelve or sixteen panes; the four corner rooms each contain one corner, twenty-paned window (a typical feature of International style buildings). Seven bathroom windows have been covered with a unique grid pattern created by horizontal and vertical concrete bricks set into the wall. The grids have been painted blue to emphasize the feature against the white exterior walls. Each door is solid core wood. A concrete block retaining wall separates the sidewalk in front of the rooms from the landscaping in front of the owner's suite and rooms five, six and seven; the wall contains small, decorative square windows. Seven wall mounted electric light fixtures have been placed on the exterior walls. Room interiors have concrete block walls and either drywall or painted board ceilings. Units three and four were combined to create an owner's suite around 1985, but the other sixteen rooms remain substantially unchanged.<sup>43</sup>

#### North Wing (Lodge Building B)

The north wing was constructed in 1941, and has the same eclectic architectural style, containing elements of International style and Spanish-style architecture, of the other lodge buildings. It is single-story, with a low-pitched concrete shake roof (reminiscent of terra cotta tile), whitewashed concrete block walls and a concrete slab floor. There are eighteen units. The building is 207' long and contains 4,524 square feet.<sup>44</sup> Two front gables face east, near each end of the structure, while the rest of the building is topped with a shed roof. The shed roof intersects with the gables. Both the shed roof overhang and the two front gables in front of the structure are supported by 6" x 6" posts. The roof overhang creates porch space that runs the length of the structure. The windows are single pane and steel-framed, and have either two, eight, twelve or sixteen panes. Rooms 35 and 37 have twenty-paned corner windows. The doors are solid core wood. Seven bathroom windows have been covered with a unique grid pattern created horizontal and vertical concrete bricks set into the wall. The grids have been painted blue to emphasize the feature against the white exterior walls. Seven wall mounted electric lights are placed along exterior walls, along the porch. Room interiors have concrete block walls and either drywall or painted board ceilings. The eighteen guest rooms have been used as such since 1941 and remain essentially the same.

---

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Paul Chandler, Jr., by author, 24 January 2008.

<sup>44</sup> Stevens, "Limited Appraisal Assignment Summary Appraisal Report."

## Annex

The annex building is located south of the main complex and was probably built in 1954.<sup>45</sup> It was designed to fit into the existing lodge complex, and it was constructed with the same type of roof, support beams, doors, light fixtures, windows and decorative features. The building is 2576 square feet, is 20' wide and 127' long, and contains eight guest rooms. It is single-story, with a concrete shake roof (reminiscent of terra cotta tile), concrete block walls and a concrete slab floor. The shed roof is supported by 6" x 6" posts; the roof overhang creates a porch that runs along the length of the building. One lamp post stands at the north end of the structure. Seven wall mounted electric lamps are positioned along the exterior wall. Seven bathroom windows have been covered with a unique grid pattern created by horizontal and vertical concrete bricks set into the wall. The grids have been painted blue to emphasize the feature against the white exterior walls. The main room windows are eight-paned and steel framed.

## Part III: Sources of Information

### Archives

Boulder City Historical Society Archives, Boulder City, NV, Lake Mead Collection  
Lake Mead National Recreation Area Archives, Boulder City, NV  
National Archives and Records Administration- Laguna Niguel, RG 79, Lake Mead National Recreation Area  
University of Nevada-Las Vegas, Special Collections

### Newspapers

Los Angeles Times  
New York Times  
Boulder City News  
Las Vegas Review-Journal

### Online Resources

National Park Service, Technical Information Center, [etc.nps.gov](http://etc.nps.gov)

### Secondary Sources

Carr, Ethan. *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007.  
Department of the Interior, National Park Service. *Shaping the System: The National Park Service*. Harpers Ferry: National Park Service, 1991.

---

<sup>45</sup> Stevens, "Limited Appraisal Assignment Summary Appraisal Report." Stevens reports that the building was constructed in 1954, though a 1957 NPS assessment states that only three lodge buildings exist. The annex may have initially been used as employee housing, and was thus not counted as a lodge building. Archival photos prove that it was built before 1960. LAME Archives; Aerial Photograph #5595, LAME Archives.

Jackson-Retondo, Elaine, "Determination of Eligibility: Cottonwood Cove Developed Area," September 21, 2005.

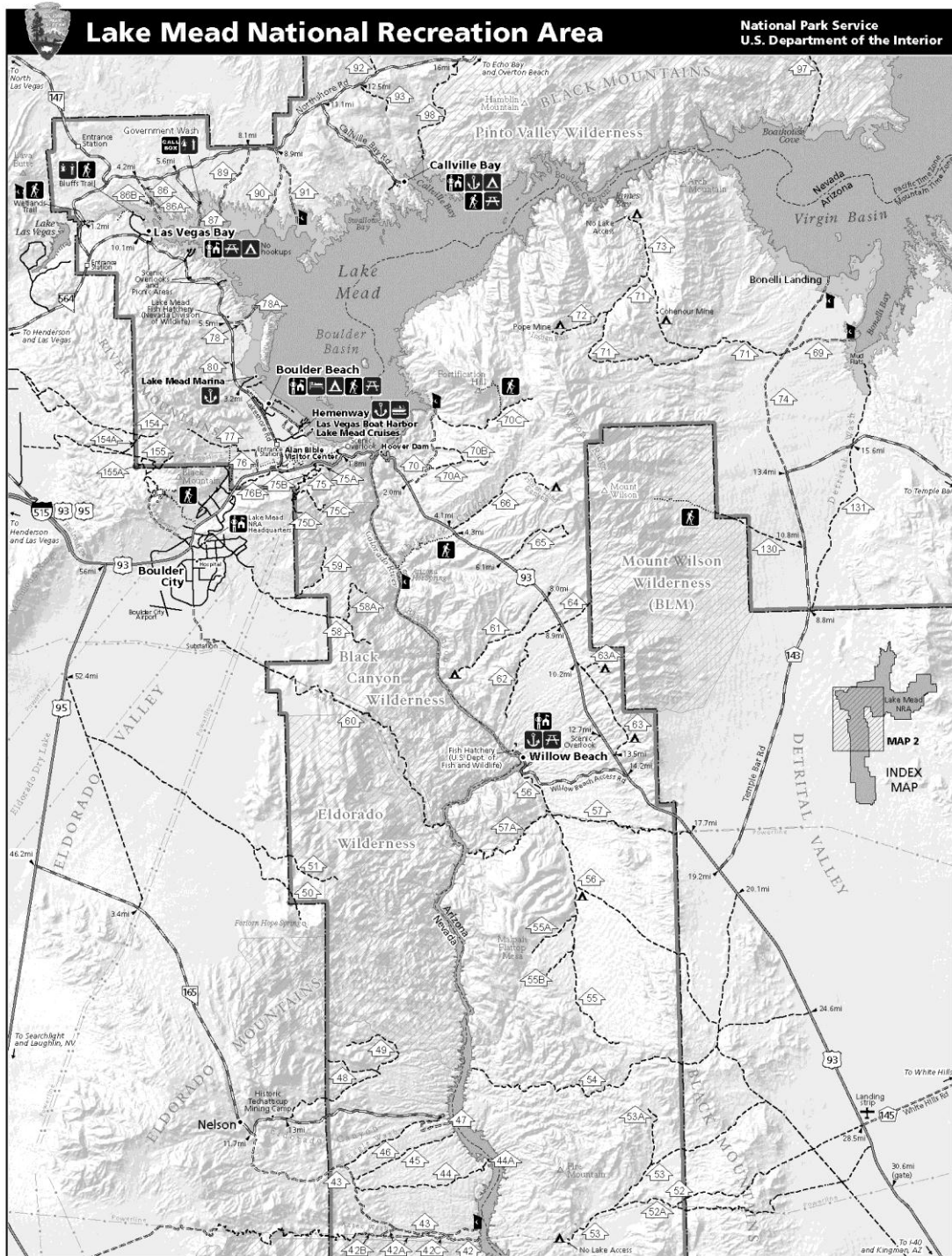
McBride, Dennis. . "Grand Canyon-Boulder Dam Tours, Inc: Southern Nevada's First Venture into Commercial

Tourism," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, Summer 1984.

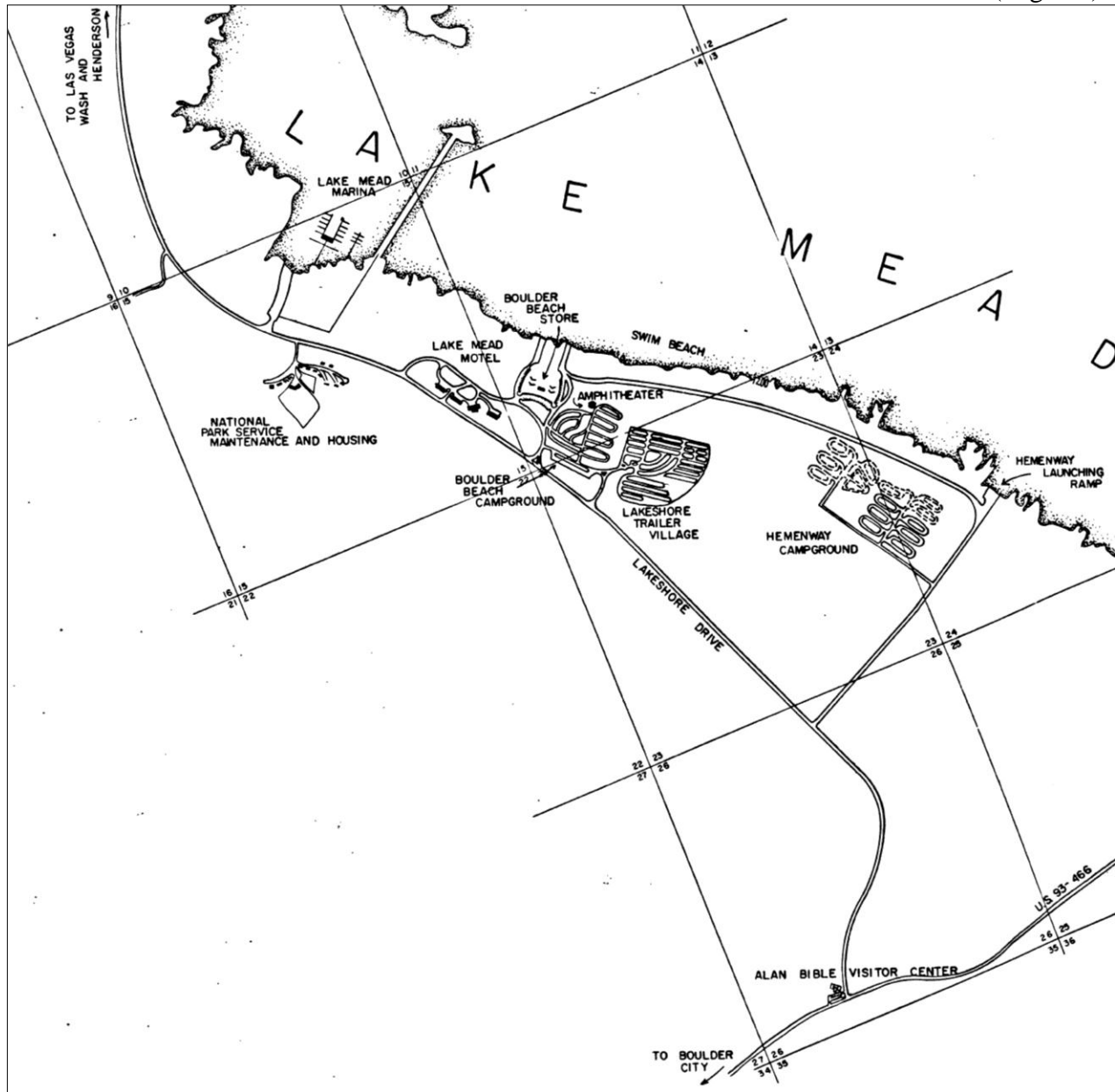
Rothman, Hal. *Balancing the Mandates: Administrative History of Lake Mead National Recreation Area* (draft), 2004.

Sellars, Richard. *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.

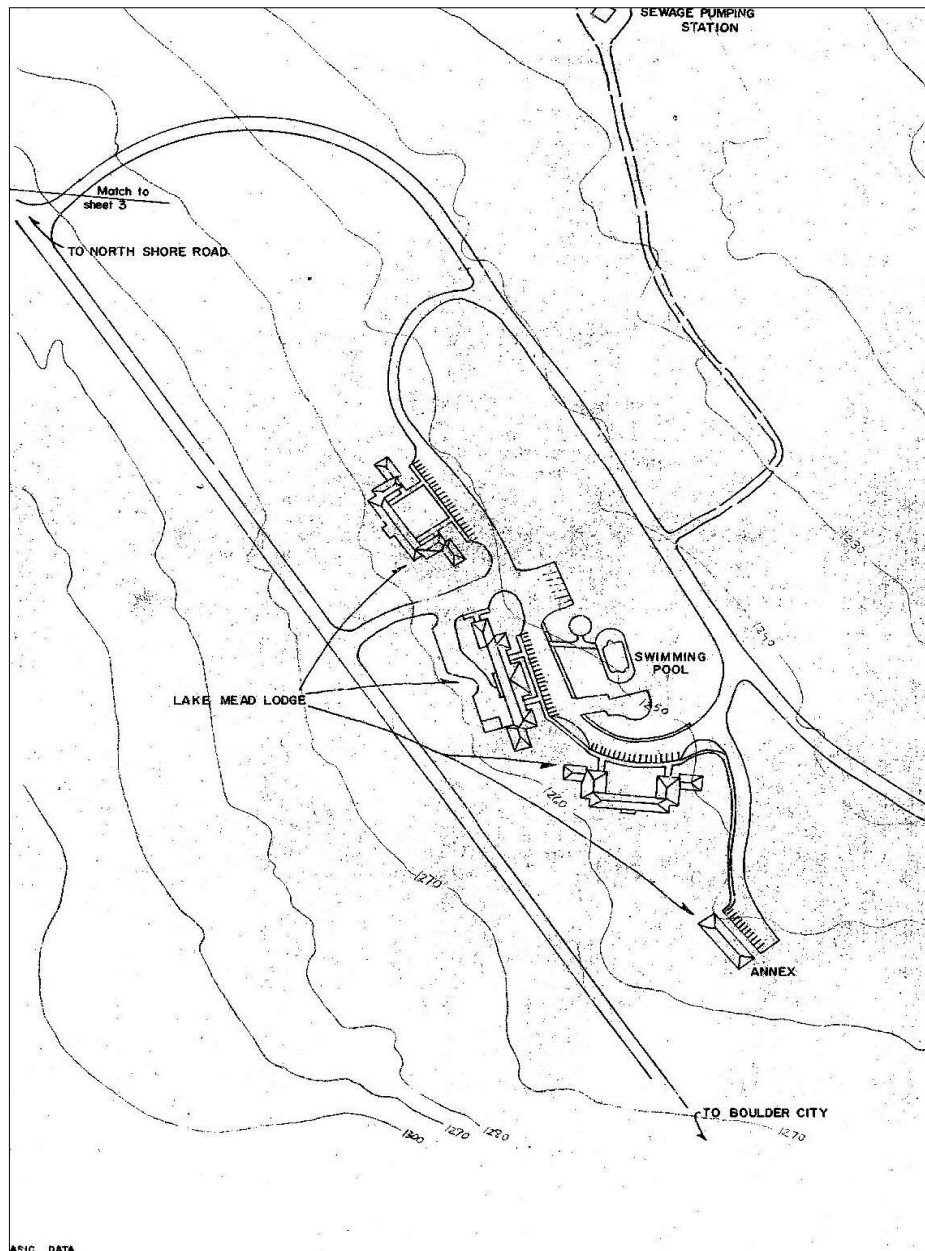
Stevens, Kent. "Limited Appraisal Assignment Summary," 6 October 1998, Lake Mead National Recreation Area Archives, Boulder City, NV.



Lake Mead National Recreation Area map. Lake Mead Lodge is located in the Boulder Beach area.



Lake Mead Lodge and Boulder Beach.



Lake Mead Lodge. The driveway in the center of the photo is no longer in use.





The future site of Lake Mead Lodge in 1941. The NPS had grand development schemes for Hemenway Wash, and they asked the concessionaire to build the lodge in that area.



An aerial view of Lake Mead Lodge in 1945. Courtesy of Boulder City Historical Society.

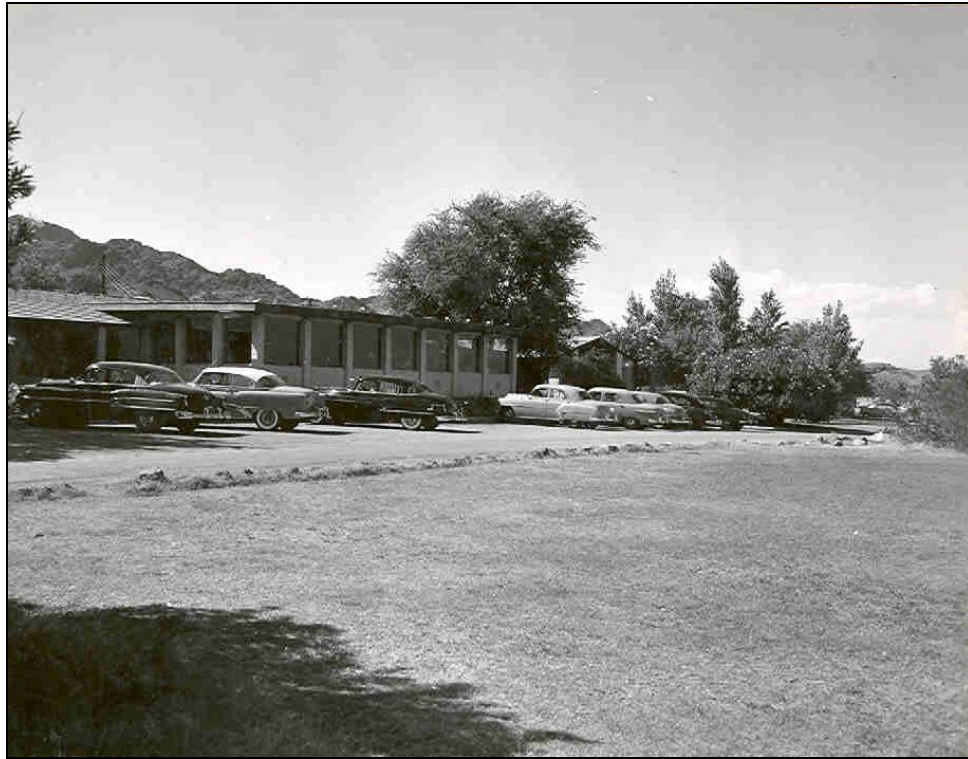


The administration building in 1945. The building contained offices, staff housing, a dining room and lounge, and a gift shop.



Truss and gable, 1945.





A larger restaurant was added to the administration building in 1949 (here, pictured in 1951).



Building B (the north wing) in 1945.



Building B (the north wing) in 1945.



Building B in 1951, after the National Park Service landscaped the site.





Guests at the lodge in January 1942. Courtesy of the Boulder City Historical Society.



Lake Mead Lodge postcard, ca. 1950. Courtesy of the Boulder City Historical Society.



The lodge's lounge became a popular nightspot for local residents, since it was the only bar in the area. Bartender Henry Bradley was a well known Boulder City resident. Bradley had been the first African-American to buy a home in the town, and he also worked as a chauffeur for Grand Canyon-Boulder Dam Tours, Inc. Courtesy of the Boulder City Historical Society.



**R**IGHT AT YOUR DOORSTEP  
**MOTOR HOTEL**

Get away from it all! Here at Lake Mead Lodge life is simple and comfortable . . . and all of the complicated problems are a long distance away. Leave your troubles and come to a place of extreme quiet and peace.

If you want entertainment and amusement, a few minutes' drive brings you to Las Vegas where there is fun galore. But Lake Mead Lodge will always be a place of rest and enchantment! The climate at Lake Mead is delightful the year 'round. Plan now for a care-free, fun-time vacation at Lake Mead Lodge!

Lake Mead Lodge is not expensive. Very reasonable rates.

**LAKE MEAD LODGE IS  
RECOMMENDED BY  
DUNCAN HINES AND  
GOURMETS GUIDE**

🐟

**NEVADA'S WONDERFUL RESORT  
ON THE SHORE OF LAKE MEAD**  
Five Miles Northeast of Boulder City  
ANOTHER CONTINENTAL HOTEL

FISHING ALL YEAR—no closed Season!  
Boats, cruisers, and speed boats may be rented by hour or day. Tackle rented to boating parties. Enjoy your fun-time in Nature's astonishing wonderland!

**LET'S GO  
Fishin'**

**BOULDER CITY, NEVADA**  
**LAKE MEAD  
LODGE**

🐟      🐟

**OPEN  
ALL YEAR**      **NO CLOSED  
SEASON**







**COCKTAIL  
BAR**

For refreshment after a day of outdoor recreation . . . the Cocktail Lounge.

**T**HE world is full of good fishing grounds but nowhere will the sportsman find a more unique site for indulging his skill than in and around Lake Mead. For here is a fisherman's delight, set in some of America's most unusual scenery. Winter and summer, Lake Mead is a perfect place to fish . . . here there is no closed season!



**DINING  
ROOM**

An inviting place to enjoy some of our appetizing meals . . . prepared especially for sportsmen!

**A** Recreation Area that is unsurpassed! Here one will find plenty of things to do besides fish. Cruising and boating on Lake Mead is exciting. A visit to Hoover Dam is interesting and educational . . . just a short distance from Lake Mead Lodge. The National Park Service administers the Lake Mead Recreational Area and maintains a museum at Boulder City which is open to the public without charge.



**DRIVE IN !**

Lake Mead is a perfect motorists' hotel . . . Car parking near your cottage and complete informality . . . Come as you are!





**LAKE MEAD**

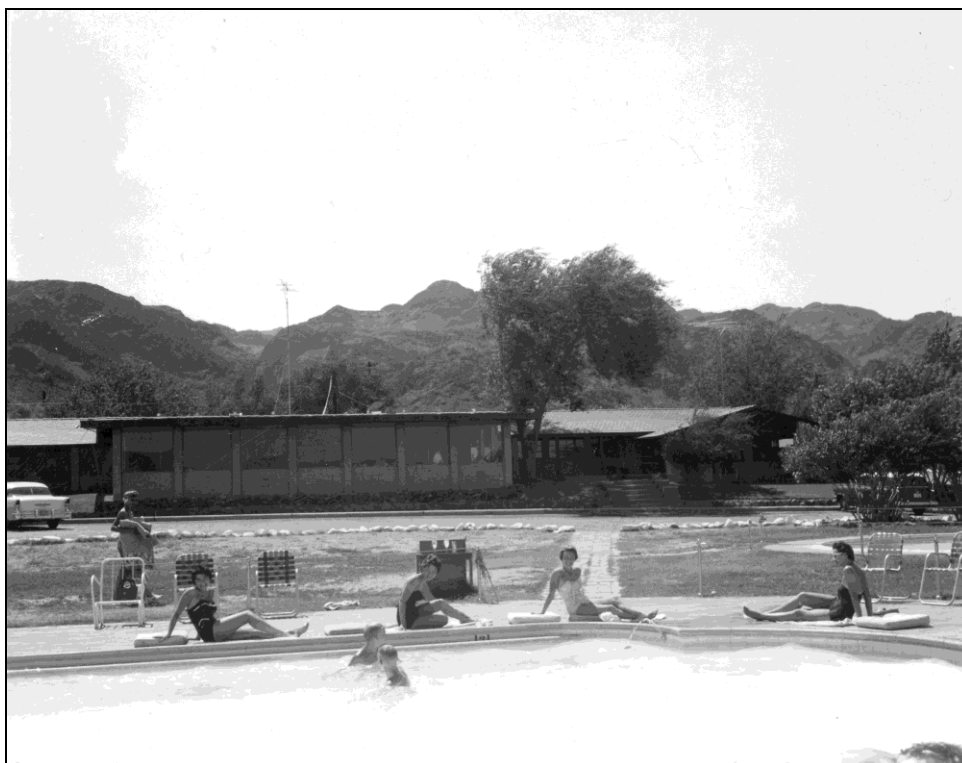
Lake Mead Lodge overlooks a colorful panorama of mountains and water!

**LAKE MEAD LODGE . . . just two jumps from the world's best fishing**

Courtesy of the Boulder City Historical Society.



The NPS had pushed lodge owners to expand and upgrade facilities since the mid-1940s, and in 1954, the concessionaire installed a 30,000 gallon swimming pool.



Guests enjoying the lodge pool, ca. mid-1950s.